

Annual Newsletter from the
University of Rochester
Department of

Philosophy

Special Thanks

Our department recently received a very generous donation of \$2,000 from Emmett (University of Rochester, Philosophy PhD 2023) and Marisa Wilson. We are deeply grateful to both of them for the vote of confidence that this embodies. Gifts like these allow us to sustain—and perhaps grow!—the many exciting things we do in our department. Funds like these enable graduate students to travel to conferences, to host conferences here and invite scholars of renown to speak at them. They aid with our recruiting efforts, and the special events that help build our community. Heartfelt thanks to Marisa and Emmett!



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From the Department Chair

I was fortunate to begin my term as chair at a time when our department is thriving! And although there have recently been all kinds of challenges for higher education, we have been able to continue our good work in teaching and research. Indeed, you can feel the enthusiasm in the air, in our classrooms and even in our faculty meetings. We are very well supported by our staff and administration, and I'm confident that we'll all feel renewed vigor when we start again in fall.



One reason for that is our new faculty. This year, we welcomed Rush Stewart into our ranks. Rush came to us from King's College London and joined us as associate professor. He works on decision theory, formal epistemology, and social epistemology (among other things), and it has been great to have him around. In fall, we'll be joined by Grace Helton, who works on cognitive science and epistemology. Grace, too, will join us as associate professor. She's coming to us from Princeton, and we're all very excited to have her among us.

Our community of affiliated faculty is also growing. Bryanna Moore joined the Department of Health Humanities and Bioethics (HHBe) at the University of Rochester Medical Center and we're happy to say also has an appointment with us. Bryanna's interests include medical decision-making, pediatric ethics, community-engaged practice, virtue ethics, and death studies.

Along with Lainie Ross and Jon Herrington, this makes quite a community of philosophers in HHBe and we're proud to consider them part of our community as well.

This year we also welcomed David Litavsky into a new position: graduate coordinator. David has been working very hard and learning all the ins and outs of the department, and I know that Cheryl and I, in particular, have been very grateful to have him around. It has been great having his fresh perspective on how we run the department, not to mention his enthusiasm and aplomb.

After more than 11 years with us, Cheryl has announced her intention to retire. I suspect most of you reading this already appreciate the immense amount of work that Cheryl has done to keep things running smoothly in our department, and so it will come as no surprise that she is also working to make sure that things keep humming along in her absence. Cheryl has been a very big part of my own development in this department. From getting me situated when I started in this department to helping me learn how things run in admissions and the graduate program while I was director of graduate studies, it's almost as if she was getting me ready to be chair one day! Be that as it may, the transition would have been an awful lot harder without her. We all owe Cheryl a great debt of thanks. Thus let me publicly say: Thank you for everything, Cheryl! Don't forget to visit us...and bring Abby!

Paul Audi
Chair, Department of Philosophy

Updates from Our Faculty

Paul Audi

It's been quite a year! I became chair, which has been a lot of work, but most of it is very rewarding—and I get to do almost all of it surrounded by wonderful people! One thing I was always apprehensive about was the reduction in teaching. But it has been nice focusing on one class at a time. And my classes this year were a special pleasure. Most of that is thanks to the extraordinary students we have at the university. In fall, I taught the 200/400 level metaphysics course. Thanks to AI (or out of spite for it), I started asking my students to give me handwritten work almost every class. Before I began, I thought of that as a necessary evil (the evil being one more demand on my time). But in fact it has been a joy to read my students' thoughts and to have a much better sense of how the class is going as a whole. This spring I taught a new course: The Philosophy of Humor (also at the 200/400 level). I enjoy the topic for its own sake, of course, but it has also been a wonderful excuse to think about metaphysics, philosophy of mind, ethics, and moral psychology, among other things! (You'll be glad to hear that the course has not perceptibly raised the probability of a late-starting career in comedy, and I anticipate completing my term as chair.) On the research side, I have a paper on tropes and laws of nature coming out in *Noûs*, and have some work in progress on dispositions and grounding. I also have a few projects going now on the philosophy of humor, one of which I presented at the Lighthearted Philosophers Society in November. I look forward to working on all these projects this summer, and to working on my short game in pickleball.

Earl Conee

During the past academic year, I have engaged in a typical combination of teaching, research, and service, culminating in a self-referring departmental newsletter entry—this time it is this one.

Randall Curren

I am realizing, as I contemplate the past year, that I have been less stationary and silent than I'd imagined. I had speaking engagements in Zurich in September, Queens in October, at the annual Central New York Moral Psychology Workshop in November, Oxford in January, and conferences in Memphis and Baltimore in March. Since completing a big entry in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* last summer I have been mostly thinking about emotion regulation, well-being, and public policy. I was happy to receive a small grant to work on denial as a manifestation of dysfunctional emotion regulation and strategies of remediation.

Richard Dees

The program in public health-related majors—which includes the nation's only undergraduate major in bioethics—became an independent entity this year, so I am now officially its first director, though I still think of myself as the chair of its steering committee. Since the Department of Health Humanities and Bioethics now offers a strong set of bioethics courses, between it and the River Campus offerings, the University of Rochester now boasts a wide array of courses in bioethics covering traditional medical issues to courses in public health ethics, clinical ethics, global health ethics,

neuroethics, and health data ethics. On a personal front, I continue to work on projects about paternalism, newborn screening, and the nature of a good life.

William FitzPatrick

Last summer I had the pleasure of seeing two of my graduate advisees give wonderful presentations of excellent dissertations (Zach Barber on the roles of mindfulness in the virtues, and Michael Carrick on theories of welfare for non-human animals) to complete their PhD degrees. In the fall I kicked off the lecture series on *Dignity* for the Paul M. Schyve Center for Bioethics and the Humanities Center, with a talk titled "Reflections on the Uses and Misuses of the Concept of Human Dignity in Bioethics." A highlight of the spring was a discussion of some of my recent work in metaethics at the Yale Center for Law and Philosophy, as part of its annual speaker series. I'm currently finishing a paper on the difference between non-reductive ethical naturalism and an ethical non-naturalism that posits irreducibly evaluative or normative properties—and why it matters. Much of this year has also been devoted to University-level committees, working groups and task forces dealing with issues such as free and civil discourse (working in particular to formulate and defend principles of freedom of expression for our campus), ethical investment policies, and navigating the challenges of the current political situation for higher education.



Graduate students Zee Click (left) and Ashley Labodda (right) dress like Professor William FitzPatrick (middle) on Halloween by donning his hallmark blazer, shades and slick hair.



Yanssel Garcia

As I write this, we're approaching the end of the spring semester, and I can't believe I've been back in Rochester for nearing a year already. Much harder to believe is the fact that I get to be back here in this wonderful department. It's been a wild, fun, hectic year, both academically and personally. I look forward to more wild, fun (and hopefully *less* hectic!) years.

Bryanna Moore

I joined the University of Rochester in May 2024, with a primary appointment in the Department of Health Humanities and Bioethics and a secondary appointment in the Department of Philosophy. What a whirlwind of a year it's been! I've continued to dive into the role of reasons (and reason-giving practices) in medical decision-making with my colleague Amy Caruso Brown. We published a piece titled "Do Reasons Matter? Navigating Parents' Reasons in Healthcare Decisions for Children" in the *American Journal of Bioethics*. Jon Herington and I, along with our colleague Şerife Terkin, published a commentary titled "The Integration of Artificial Intelligence-Powered Psychotherapy Chatbots in Pediatric Care: Scaffold or Substitute?" In *The Journal of Pediatrics*. Robot therapists? Nope. A lot of painful reading on suffering and intersubjectivity resulted in a paper that was published by the *Cambridge Quarterly of Healthcare Ethics*. And I was proud to see a piece exploring whether "rational belief" is a necessary condition for decision-making capacity—led by graduate student Johnna Wellesley (and with the help of our colleague Dom Wilkinson)—come out in *The Journal of Medical Ethics*. I'm looking forward to continuing to settle into the philosophical community in Rochester and excited for the year ahead!

Alison Peterman

I was on leave this year, which had its perks, but I missed my colleagues and students and I am looking forward to being back in the fall. This past year, I published several articles about the great 17th century English philosopher Margaret Cavendish, and my first book, which is also about Cavendish, came out last month. I don't feel quite done with this incredibly complex and interesting figure, but I spent part of this research year studying the work of Émilie du Châtelet, the 18th century philosopher and physicist.

Mark Povich

I've had a pretty productive year. My book was published! You can access an electronic version at the bottom of my website, markpovich.com. I have no new publications unfortunately but three papers under review, one of which I have revised and resubmitted. I feel confident that that one will be published. I also attended a conference on the history of mathematization of science in Atlanta, and am currently trying to turn my presentation into something publishable.

Lainie Ross

Three Health Humanities and Bioethics faculty now have secondary appointments in Philosophy (Jon Herington, Bryanna Moore and myself)! My own scholarship this year has focused on the ethical issues in organ transplantation. I co-authored a

manuscript on the ethics of normothermic regional perfusion, a technique to improve the quality of donated deceased organs. We argued that the technique is a form of resuscitation and therefore violates the dead donor rule. I also collaborated on a manuscript examining the ethics of mandating vaccination for potential organ donor child recipients. Although the authors are strong proponents of vaccination, we argued against mandatory vaccine policies for pediatric transplant eligibility. In February 2025, I gave surgical grand rounds for the University of Rochester department of surgery on pediatric transplantation: the child as donor and recipient.

In a separate line of scholarship, I published several articles on pediatric decision-making in 2024 which became the basis for a talk I gave for the Inaugural Sommer Endowed Lectureship at Children's Mercy, Kansas City, Missouri, titled "The Moral Underpinnings of Pediatric Decision-Making", and for my Phelps Colloquium Series lecture in March 2025 titled "Better than Best Interest in Pediatric Decision Making" where I compared US and UK approaches. I am also engaged in a serious academic debate on the ethics of performing whole genome sequencing in newborns and was invited to speak at a National Academy of Medicine conference on Newborn Screening and another conference in Heidelberg, Germany, in March 2024. Two manuscripts on this topic are published (or in-process), one in the *Annual Review of Genomics* and the other in *Ethik in der Medizin (Ethics in Medicine)*.



Dr. Lainie Ross is officially inducted into the National Academy of Medicine (Oct. 2024).

Rush Stewart

It's been great joining the department this year! I've very much enjoyed the evocative talks and getting to know my colleagues and students. In the fall, I was able to focus exclusively on research, publishing papers on algorithmic fairness and rational policy choice. For several weeks into winter, I thought people were bluffing about the snow. They weren't. In the spring, I taught Philosophy of Science and the Seminar for Majors, which focused on the democracy vs. epistocracy debate. I also managed to do some research on sustainability in social choice, a new topic for me. I hope to present the project at the Philosophy, Politics, and Economics conference in London this summer, so we'll see if it's something to keep pursuing!



Updates from Our Graduate Students

Juan Cadile

This year, I've been exploring questions at the intersection of moral philosophy, artificial intelligence, and epistemology. I recently completed a paper titled "On Recommender Systems, Flourishing, and Autonomy," which investigates how algorithmic design choices can either undermine or support the conditions necessary for human autonomy. The paper draws from the Aristotelian idea of virtuous character, Rawlsian political liberalism, and cognitive scaffolding theory. I propose not only ethical and institutional safeguards, but also explore the extent to which recommender systems can be designed to optimize for long-term well-being—while remaining compatible with the demands of a pluralistic, liberal society.

In parallel, I've been working with the Cosmos Institute on a research initiative called Artificial Virtuous Agents (*ArtificialMoralIntelligence.com*), which aims to operationalize virtuous dispositions and embed them in AI systems. The project combines philosophical theory and neurosymbolic design to explore how traits like honesty, humility, and practical wisdom might inform the behavior of educable, value-aligned agents. As part of this effort, we're building a decentralized system for collecting moral intuitions from users around the world—inviting them to weigh in on whether specific actions in context are virtuous or not. These judgments help feed mathematical models that aim to approximate phronesis (practical wisdom) through weighted, context-sensitive reasoning algorithms that learn on the go.

Finally, I've been developing work on epistemic authority and AI—particularly how to determine trustworthiness in contested domains. This ties into broader concerns about how we fact-check and curate truth: top-down approaches (like corporate fact-checkers) risk ideological gatekeeping, while bottom-up systems (like Community Notes) risk majority-driven error. My goal is to philosophically ground a mechanism by which tech platforms might identify the appropriate epistemic authority and evidence relevant to assess a given post.

An abridged version of my recommender systems work will soon appear in a widely read Substack focused on philosophy and emerging technologies.

Zee Click

Hi y'all! It's been a busy year! I fear you haven't heard from me in this newsletter before, so a bit of introduction—I'm Zee! This is my last funded semester in this PhD program. Much of my time here has been spent building community and advocating for fellow grads. For two years, I was Chair of outGRADS, our Graduate Student LGBTQ+ organization. For the last four years, I've headed up our chapter of Minorities and Philosophy (MAP). I also served as our Department Representative to the graduate student association for two years. Finally, this semester, I've helped organize the graduate worker push for a union, both as a founding member of the Graduate Labor Union (GLU) and a continuing member of its Organizing Committee.

This spring semester has been especially active! I completed my last bits of coursework, attended a conference in Hawaii, completed my writing seminar, and now I'm preparing to take my qualifying exam. Funding will run out for me before I write my dissertation, as it does for many grads in this 5-year program.

I am, however, happy to report that I'll be the Diversity Scholar in Philosophy at Ithaca College! Woohoo! I'll be teaching courses on feminist philosophy and political resistance while I finish up my degree.

Lastly, as I write this, graduate workers at UR are on strike. We are asking only for a fair process and opportunity to vote on unionizing. The university backed out of our agreement for a fair private election, now insisting we go through Trump's NLRB. They've further signaled interest in challenging even that, suggesting they would aim to overturn grad worker rights across the US. A union empowers graduate workers to collectively advocate for a living wage, stand up for the most vulnerable among us, and gives us a seat at the table for decisions that affect us. I hope by the time you read this, we have won a fair process.

Awards, Honors and Highlights

2024 Award for the Heidi M. Payne First-Year Outstanding Essay

Ashley Labodda

"The Phenomenology of Moral Authority without a Robust Moral Ontology"

2024 Award for Outstanding Essay

Sumin Oh

"Language Models and Understanding Language"

2024-2025 Award for Outstanding Teaching Assistant

Ashley Labodda

Wang Family Graduate Student Summer Fellowship

Vincent Tanzil

This award provides support for students in the School of Arts & Sciences for summer research. Vincent was selected based on his outstanding accomplishments as well as his promise as a researcher and educator.

Meliora Digital and Interdisciplinary Fellowship in the Digital Humanities

Yusuke Satake

This prestigious, highly competitive fellowship provides recipients the opportunity to learn more about the technologies available for advanced study of the humanities and to collaborate with other graduate students in similar fields.

Incoming PhD Students

The Department of Philosophy is looking forward to welcoming its newest admitted doctoral students for the Fall 2025 semester:

Chad Brown

BA, University of Colorado at Boulder

Taylor Matalon

MA, New York University; MA, University of Chicago



Kevin Gausselin

Six years have flown by! I've continued to enjoy working on my dissertation on evidence possession with Rich, and am now applying some of my ideas to the value of knowledge and epistemic contextualism. Perhaps the highlight of the year was helping to organize our 12th Biennial Graduate Epistemology Conference in October—my thanks to all of our graduate students for their hard work (and to Bill for graciously hosting the conference party)! Another highlight was traveling to the Eastern APA meeting with Yusuke Satake and receiving comments from our own Vincent Tanzil. I also had the opportunity to present some of my ideas at the University of Iowa's graduate conference, the Pacific APA, and in the illustrious Golborn Grad Talk Series. And I've enjoyed participating in Zeynep's seminar on the epistemology of journalism, Earl's seminar on metaethics, and working on Bayesianism with Harry Golborn (of GradTalk fame). Also, congratulations to Cheryl on her well-deserved retirement! She's been a stable source of support since my first year here!



Ashley Labodda

Year two is in the books! It has been another great year, not least because I was our department graduate representative this year. It kept me extra busy, but I really enjoyed serving in this role!

I started TA-ing this year, and I was again reminded of how much I enjoy working with students! I look forward to continuing to engage with students as the instructor of a course titled Ethics in the Modern World this summer as part of the University of Rochester Pre-College Program. Also, in line with my passion for education, I contributed an entry on the STEM/Humanities divide to the APA Grad Student Chronicles this year. It is set to be published in May!

In this entry last year, I said that I would be developing projects in both biomedical ethics and metaethics, and I kept that promise. I started the academic year by presenting my paper on the phenomenology of moral authority at the XVII Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress. I was also awarded the department's Hedi M. Payne First-Year Outstanding Essay Award this year for

the same paper. I am honored to have been chosen for this award, and I look forward to continuing to work on it with the hopes of publishing. I finished this academic year by presenting another paper of mine on different models of medical decision making at the Paul M. Schyve MD, Center for Bioethics Conference. All this is to say, I continue to stay busy, and I look forward to being busy in year three!

Lastly, I want to thank Cheryl, one of our department administrators, for all of her service and friendship since I joined the department! Thank you for everything, Cheryl, and I hope you have a happy retirement!

Evan Lopes

This newsletter comes at the end of my first year at UR, and I must say, it was a good one. I was given the opportunity to comment on a paper at our 12th Biennial Graduate Epistemology Conference. I was able to push some old projects in new directions thanks to clever insight from several members of the department. I was also prompted to research areas that were before completely unknown to me. All in all, this has been an amazing year of learning and growth. I am very hopeful for the years to come.

Vincent Tanzil

This year has been quite something, as I am nearing the end of my studies here in Rochester. I enjoyed our Epistemology conference, in which I gave comments and listened to many insightful talks. I also presented at SUNY Binghamton, which was both interesting and fun. I was deeply honored when the esteemed Kevin Gausselin asked me to give comments on his presentation at the Eastern APA. This was my first APA meeting (I should've gone to more), and I was very pleased to spend it commenting on Kevin's paper and meeting many grads and other philosophers whom I had met at previous conferences. I am thankful to the Graduate Affairs office for enabling me to attend this APA meeting, which would have otherwise been prohibitively costly. All in all, it has been another wonderful year. It's a bit sad to think that this might be my final year.

Yun-Cheng Dylan Wang

This has been a transformative first year for me, as I have been adjusting my mindset from that of a student to that of a researcher. Somehow, the mere realization that I am now a PhD student has suddenly made me appreciate what philosophy as a career implies. With that frame of mind, I'm very grateful to be able to present my paper on religious psychology and rationality at Princeton's ethics of belief conference and Toronto's philosophy of religion working group. Both were truly terrific learning experiences. I'm also excited to have my paper on LLM interpretability for Jens' philosophy of AI class accepted by the upcoming joint conference of APPSA and LMPST, taking place very conveniently in my hometown Taipei. Both papers mark a transition of my philosophical interests to a more empirically informed approach. Because of these projects, I've been exploring literature in anthropology and psychology in the past year, and I hope to do more research that combines empirical studies with rigorous analytic philosophy in the future.



Politics, Philosophy and Economics

A Spotlight on a Growing Major

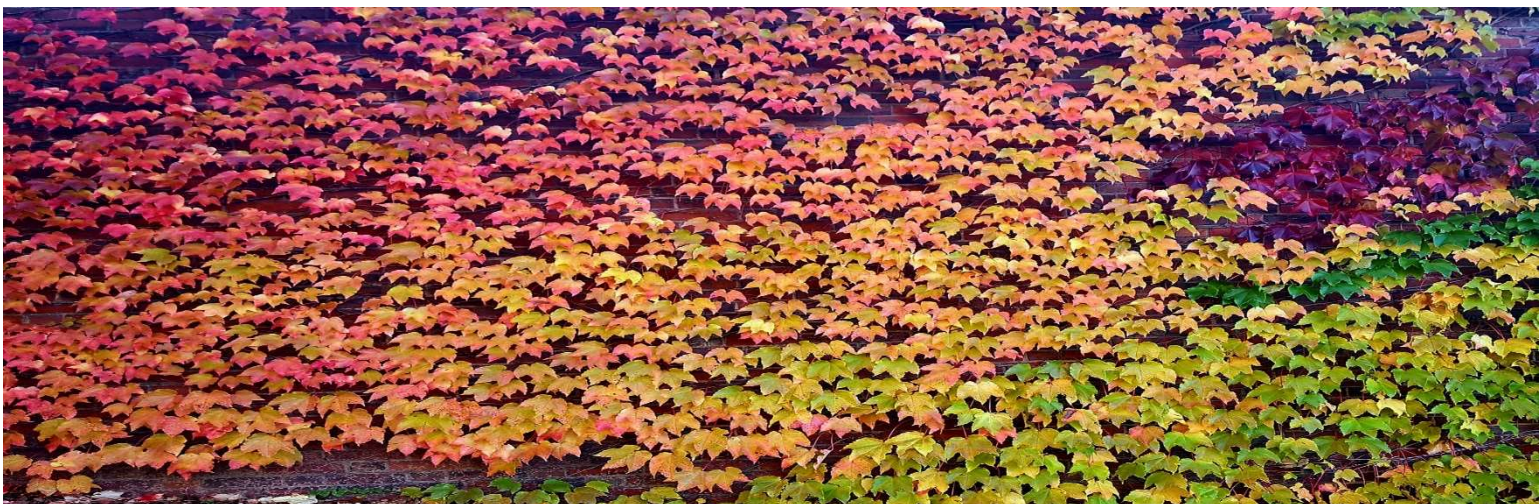
Since its origin as a degree at Oxford University in the 1920s, Politics, Philosophy, and Economics has become a staple major at higher education institutions across the globe.

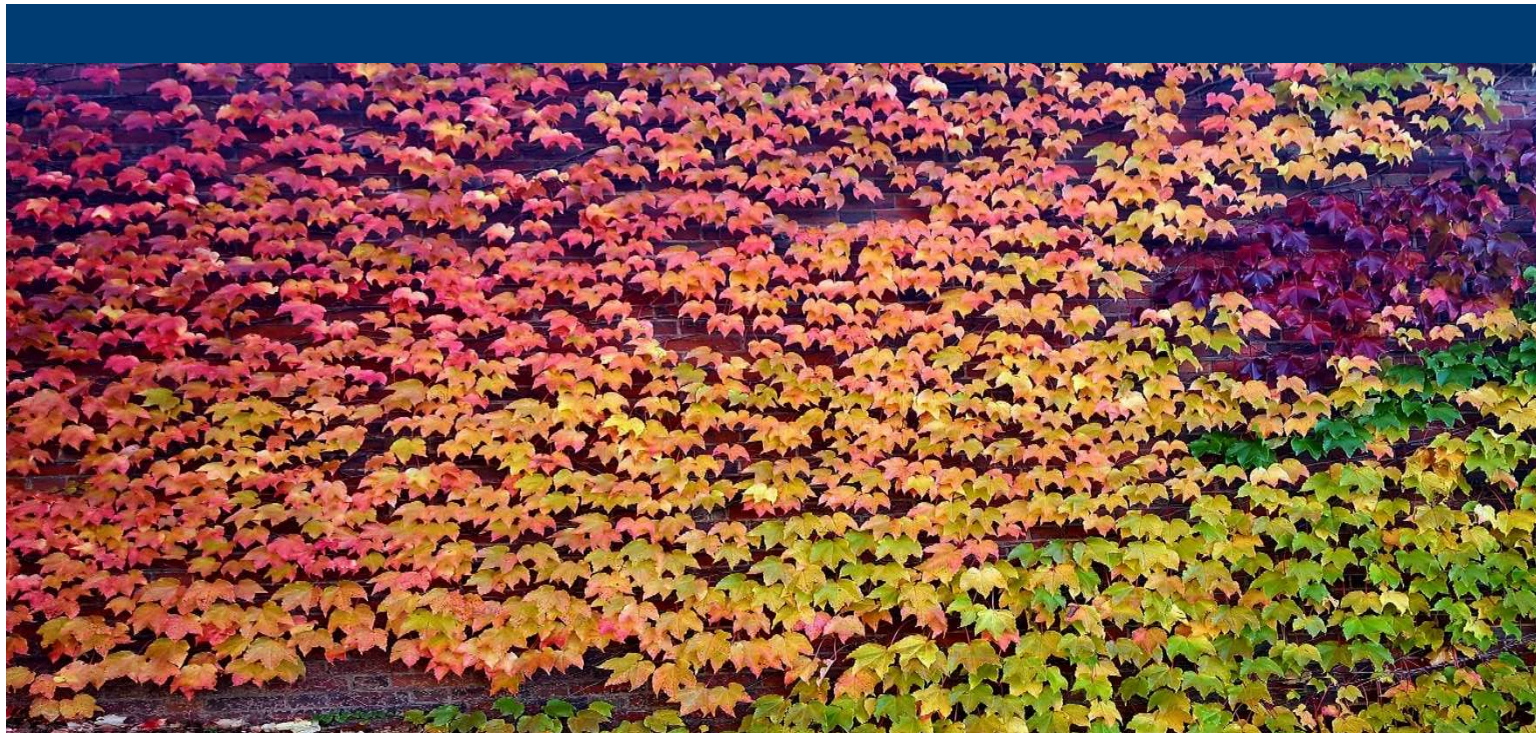
The interdisciplinary field made its way to the University of Rochester when Department of Philosophy faculty Rosa Terlazzo and Randall Curren and Political Science professors Jim Johnson and John Duggan developed the PPE major for the 2022-2023 academic year.

Students at the University of Rochester were developing overlapping interests in philosophy, political science and economics, and the program's developers recognized the benefits of blending the skills of the disciplines when addressing practical issues.

The program was designed to provide students with the ability to apply the tools of ethical, microeconomic, and quantitative analysis to a wide array of fundamental social, political, and economic problems in the contemporary world.

In the major-specific seminar, students are challenged to think about framing issues in an interdisciplinary





manner so that they can see how tools of different disciplines can complement each other and address gaps in existing approaches to problem-solving.

The program has grown in popularity since—currently there are 64 majors enrolled. Of these, 16 declared PPE majors since March of this year.

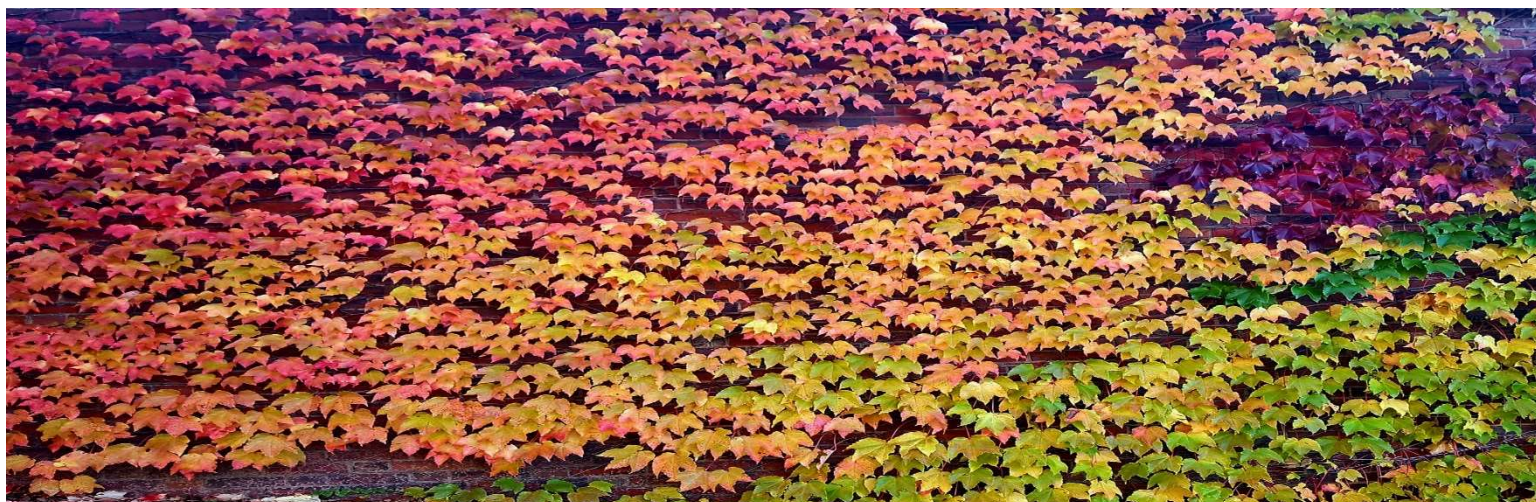
In 2023, one PPE graduate walked the stage as the first. This May, 11 students are earning their degree in the program.

“The success of the major,” Terlazzo said in *Campus Times* about the PPE program, “is really due to our student body—we have a lot of students who are

ambitious, optimistic, and hungry for the tools to solve the problems they find most urgent.”

Among the graduating seniors is senior Michael Hazard, who will be the first PPE major to graduate with a humanities concentration. He will be walking the stage with philosophy major graduates at the Department of Philosophy commencement ceremony on May 17 in Sloan Performing Arts Center.

Campus Times states that Hazard first learned about the major from a PPE seminar in his second year at the University. His interest in the program stemmed from its more theoretical approach compared to the strictly quantitative nature of Political Science.



Department Events

Philosophical Paws

It has been another great year working alongside Cheryl. I have been very good about announcing visitors with just the right amount of insistence—and always with a good tail-wag. I crunched some really good carrots this year, particularly in the spring, and occasionally lumbered into the chair's office to make sure he was staying on task. (He wasn't.) Walk times have been especially rewarding, and one great thing about the highly variable weather around here is that I never have to wait too long for a decent walking day (even though there may be several not-so-good days in between). Plans for next year include sleeping half in and half out of my bed, and standing on two legs to demand affection. Be on the lookout for my latest publication: *The Chair's Backpack: Is That an Epic Bar and Can I Have It?*



Abby is our department administrator Cheryl's three-legged pet dog and honorary furry philosopher. She can be heard giving away friendly barks at visitors in Lattimore wing or seen in Cheryl's office napping apathetically while her owner works hard running the office.

Fall 2024

September 13 – Department of Philosophy Colloquium Series

Sophie Horowitz (University of Massachusetts, Amherst) – “Plans, Evidence, and Rationality”

September 17 – Department of Philosophy Colloquium Series

Valerie Tiberius (University of Minnesota) – “Happy Immoralists and Satisfied Loners: A pragmatic perspective on disagreement”

October 4-5 – The 12th Biennial Graduate Epistemology Conference

Keynote: **Nicholas Silins** (Cornell University)

Distinguished Alumnus: **Daniel Mittag** (Albion College)

Akshan deAlwis (Washington University in St. Louis) – “Complexity and Knowledge with an Inferential Etiology”

Jiushi Guo (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign) – “Thought Experiments Designed Better: Norms for Good Thought Experiment Design”

Minseok Kim (Syracuse University) – “Closure and (Against) Impurist Solution to the Threshold Problem”

Jillian Powell (University of Massachusetts Amherst) – “Process Reliabilism Is Permissive and Plausible”

Charles Zhang (Tufts University) – “‘Might’ be Strong”

October 11 – Presented with the Philosophy Department and Goergen Institute for Data Science and Artificial Intelligence

Lily Hu (Yale University) – “What is new, and what is old, in fairness and machine learning”

November 8 – Presented with the Humanities Center, Central NY Humanities Corridor, and the Philosophy Department

Caleb Kendrick (Dartmouth College) – “A Local Solution to the Samaritan Paradox”

Qiong Wu (University of Notre Dame) – “Language Modality, and Empirical Evidence”

Jan Dowell (Syracuse University) – “Discourse Relations, Ritualized Situations, and Modal Interpretation”

Una Stojnic (Princeton University) – “Inquiry and Logical Form”

Spring 2025

March 21 – Department of Philosophy Colloquium Series

Rachana Kamtekar (Cornell University) – “Craft, Care, and Cause in Plato’s *Gorgias*”

March 28 –Department of Philosophy Colloquium Series

David Shoemaker (Cornell University) – “Finding Funny”

April 4 – Department of Philosophy Colloquium Series

Lara Buchak (Princeton University) – “Plans, Evidence, and Rationality

April 17-19 – Prospective Graduate Student Visits

Randall Curren (University of Rochester) – “From Sustainable Development Goals to Sustainable Flourishing Goals”

April 18 – Diversity Speaker and RationaliTea Social

Jennifer Prosceo (University of Rochester) – “Neurodiversity 101,” a presentation from the Office of Disability Resources

April 25 – Presented with the Philosophy Department and Goergen Institute for Data Science and Artificial Intelligence

David Danks (University of California, San Diego) – “AI and the Challenge of Foreseeability”



Alumni News



Brian Barnett (PhD 2016)

I continue to teach at St. John Fisher University (currently as a visiting assistant professor) and SUNY Geneseo (as adjunct lecturer). In fall 2024, I concluded my interim role as the program coordinator for conflict studies at Geneseo. I continue serving as editor of the peace & nonviolence category for *PhilPapers* and as a member of the McNair Scholars Advisory Board at SUNY Geneseo.

This past year was a productive one for me. My colleague Barbara Lowe and I co-founded the Dialogue in the Humanities Series at Fisher—a monthly gathering intended to spark student interest in the humanities and establish interdisciplinary dialogue among faculty. I co-led the first discussion on “The Philosophy of Henry David Thoreau.”

I published a three-part series for the APA Blog’s Current Events in Public Philosophy series. There I developed a nonviolent framework for public discourse as an alternative to both civility and “righteous” incivility:

- Part I – “Beyond Civility & Incivility”
- Part II – “Ahimsic Communication: An Alternative to Civility”
- Part III – “The Power of Ahimsic Communication”

I recently gave a talk on this for the Geneseo Philosophy Club and have been encouraged by colleagues to expand the series into a book, which I hope to begin within the next year.

I ended the year by traveling to New York City for the Eastern APA meeting, where I chaired a Meta-Philosophy Symposium and commented on a paper on the value of autonomy.

Soon I will be heading to Rome to co-teach “World Religions and Contemporary Issues” with Carlo Filice. I’ve been learning Italian for the past six months. Upon my return, I plan to spend the summer doing a bit of research and writing, developing a course on the ethics of protest, and using my free time for hiking.

Charles Cardwell (PhD 1971)

I presented “Reality, the Ego-centric Predicament, and the Linguistic Constraint” at the 55th annual meetings of the Tennessee Philosophical Association (TPA). Otherwise, I am winding down. After 19 years as TPA secretary, I passed the job on. I taught my last class in December. I do maintain an office on campus as I remain “employed” as emeritus professor.

Having made it to my ninth decade, I suffer from “normal” hearing loss, especially in higher frequencies. The experience of using a hearing aid has been interesting. Rather than the pleasant, muted sounds I had become used to, I now live in a cacophonous world dominated by grating noises. *Esse est percipi*. But is this most unpleasant world really the same world that “normal” hearers experience? How *should* the world sound?

Most puzzling.

James Van Cleve (PhD 1974)

My article “There Are No Necessary Connections Between Distinct Existences” finally appeared in *Oxford Studies in Metaphysics* for 2024. Last September I gave the Bo and Lynn Clark Lecture at Indiana University, based on another article, “*Qua*-Talk and Other Forms of Quackery,” which will appear one of these days in *Philosophy Compass*.

Eileen Daly-Boas (MA 2000 and forever ABD)

Hello from Rush Rhees Library! I’ve now been working at the library for 20 years, and have served as the Philosophy librarian for 18. Much of my work lately is rolling with damage being done by the current government administration on access to information and on higher ed in general. I’m on a pilot team to provide support to those working on evidence synthesis projects, which helps mostly STEM and Social Science researchers. I’m also continuously learning about the quality and impact of generative artificial intelligence, and how students and faculty use it for research (meh) and different stages of the writing process (not bad!). Still, my favorite thing to do is to work with faculty and students. Last year, I forgot to share that in 2023, I won a “Library All-Star” award from the Rochester Regional Library Consortium. Outside of work, I’m enjoying spending time with my husband Mike (married 10 years this March), and our two cats, Dewey and Elsie. For any alumni, if you’ve got questions about library research or alumni access to materials, I’m still your librarian! (edaly@library.rochester.edu.)

Loretta Kopelman (PhD 1966)

This year, two projects involving trips down the memory lane came to fruition. First, I was honored to be selected as one of 15 contributors by the Johns Hopkins Behrman Institute of Bioethics for an oral history project to “interview scholars who helped to found and shape the field of Bioethics.” Our interviews and a transcript of each were posted in October 2024 as “Moral Histories: Stories and Voices from the Founding Figures of Bioethics – an oral history project of the Johns Hopkins Berman Institute of Bioethics.”

Second, I was asked to contribute my recollections of Lewis White Beck to the archive in the Rush Rhees Library that holds his work. He was the founding chair of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Rochester, a highly respected Kant scholar and a southern gentleman with misgivings about women coming into the field of philosophy. His son, Hamilton Beck, asked me to contribute something. Apparently, he thought of me because I had painted a portrait of Immanuel Kant for Professor Beck, which (to my surprise) he had hung over his desk. My recollections have been added to the Beck collection.

Eric Mack (PhD 1973)

For me, this has been a big Nozick year since 2024 was the 50th anniversary of the publication of *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*. In August of 2024, I presented a paper, “Nozick on the Separateness of Person: A Reconstruction,” at a conference at Voluntary Principles Initiative. It was subsequently published in an issue of *The Independent Review* devoted to Nozick (Fall 2024). During the first week of September, I co-taught a seminar on *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* for graduate students and junior faculty in Kandersteg, Switzerland. In early October, I gave two lectures on Nozick at the Cato Institute in Washington, D.C., “Anarchy, State, and Utopia: The Earthquake and the Aftershock” and “Anarchy, State, and Utopia: Individualist Anarchism vs. the Minimal State.” Revised versions are available online at www.libertarianism.org/articles.

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Eric Mack

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